

Five Oklahoma County jail employees reassigned pending investigation of inmate death



by [NOLAN CLAY](#)

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Charlton Cash Chrisman

Acting Oklahoma County Sheriff P.D. Taylor has reassigned five jail employees pending the completion of an investigation into the latest inmate death.

The inmate, Charlton Cash Chrisman, died after an altercation with detention officers inside the jail early Wednesday morning. [He was the 20th Oklahoma County inmate to die in custody since Jan. 1, 2016.](#)

OSBI agents are investigating the death.

"We've identified five employees that I have immediately reassigned to jobs in the jail where they will have absolutely no contact with inmates, pending the outcome of the investigation," Taylor said Friday. "Four of these people were detention officers. One was a maintenance person."

The acting sheriff made the reassignments after reviewing surveillance video of the incident.

He also immediately changed the training policy, requiring any instructional training to be done through the sheriff's office training division. He specifically said the change applies to all specialized training to qualify for the S.E.R.T team, [whose members basically had been training themselves.](#)

"That's the way it should have always been, but it wasn't," Taylor said of the change.

The S.E.R.T. team consists of detention officers who deal with problem inmates.

Taylor, 70, took over as acting sheriff after his boss, John Whetsel, retired March 1. He was one of seven candidates who filed to complete Whetsel's unexpired term.

Taylor won the special Republican primary election April 4, promising voters he is the one to make positive changes.

The special general election is Sept. 12. On the ballot with Taylor are a Democrat, Mike Hanson, and an independent, Ed Grimes.

The jail has emerged again as a key campaign issue this year both because it is chronically overcrowded and because of the high number of recent deaths. Taylor has repeatedly told voters the sheriff's office is like a naval battleship, saying time will be needed to turn it around.

"I'm still turning the ship," Taylor told *The Oklahoman* on Friday.

The latest inmate to die, Chrisman, 40, of Yukon, had been jailed Tuesday, after crashing his pickup into the emergency room waiting area at Alliance Health Deaconess hospital in northwest Oklahoma City. Police reported he stated "he intentionally drove his vehicle into the building."

On Wednesday, about 45 minutes after midnight, Chrisman flooded his cell by tearing up a sprinkler head, Taylor said. A maintenance worker was able to turn off the water but S.E.R.T. officers were called because a piece of metal was seen in the cell.

The inmate died after detention officers subdued him during the altercation, authorities said. He was pronounced dead at a hospital at 1:48 a.m. Wednesday, after efforts to revive him failed.

(Story continued below...)

Chrisman has been arrested before and may have had mental health issues, authorities said. In Facebook posts, he often complained about being followed or watched.

"I've got Choppers following me everywhere I go and this ain't no joke," he wrote in one Facebook post last November. "I've got over 100 police officers and feds following me and I've asked them why."

He was jailed in Washita County on April 11 and April 12 on a trespassing complaint after going to a school in Cordell. He also was jailed on a reckless driving complaint, allegedly for driving on sidewalks in Cordell.

Chrisman was accused in a felony charge in February with assaulting his father in Oklahoma City. Police reported his father shot him in the foot to stop him.

Chrisman, who had a lawn care business, had fought with law enforcement officers before. He pleaded guilty in January 2007 to assaulting a Bethany police officer, resisting arrest and possession of marijuana. "I knew this was wrong," he wrote.

Agents with the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation will turn over reports on Chrisman's death to District Attorney David Prater. The district attorney then will review the information and determine whether anyone should be prosecuted.

<https://newsok.com/article/5546474/five-oklahoma-county-jail-employees-reassigned-pending-investigation-of-inmate-death>